

# RIMPAC 2010



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## **Bonhomme Richard Transports Unique Aircraft for RIMPAC**

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USS BONHOMME RICHARD, At Sea- The amphibious assault ship USS Bonhomme Richard (LHD 6), en route to participate in Rim of the Pacific (RIMPAC) 2010, is carrying unique cargo for training evolutions during the international maritime exercise. Bonhomme Richard left San Diego June 14 with two Czechoslovakian-built 1964 and 1965 Aero-Vodochody airplanes, modified with U.S. standard small turbojet J60 engines. These planes will simulate air to surface missile attacks for training purposes, during RIMPAC.

Traveling aboard with the embarked aircraft is retired U.S. Navy Cmdr. Gerry Gallop, who is Chief Operating Officer for Tactical Air Support Inc. The company, that owns and operates the aircraft, provides consulting services, tactics development and test and evaluation services to U.S. THIRD Fleet.

“Our company’s main goal is to increase readiness through quality training with affordable platforms,” Gallop explained. “It adds realism and training value, because we can do a pretty-good job simulating a profile a missile would fly.”

Gallop said that he and three other retired military pilots will fly the Aero Vodochody airplanes during the RIMPAC exercise.

“We all happened to retire from the military, but we weren’t done contributing,” reflected Gallop. “So we came together and found a way to continue doing what we are passionate about and continue to contribute to training and readiness of the U.S. military.”

Gallop said the modified Aero-Vodochody airplanes reach top speeds of approximately 420 knots or approximately 500 miles per hour. Tomahawk cruise missiles move at speeds of approximately 550 miles per hour. The ability to use the contracted aircraft in training simulations provides a more realistic and time-sensitive approach to the detection and countermeasures used to combat an inbound threat.

“They (Aero-Vodochody) are a particularly reliable, simpler airplane, which we have modified extensively to give us more power and performance,” explained Gallop. “We’re not as fast as an actual missile, but we’re pretty close.”

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Rim of the Pacific Exercise (RIMPAC) is the world's largest international maritime exercise with 14 countries including 34 ships, five submarines, more than 150 aircraft and 20,000 personnel in participation. Major objectives for RIMPAC include improving the readiness and efficiency of each participating unit and exercising interoperability among partner nations that have a common interest in regional maritime security.

Media interested in covering RIMPAC events should contact the RIMPAC Combined Information Bureau at (619) 726-1901. For more information on the exercise, visit [www.c3f.navy.mil/rimpac\\_2010.html](http://www.c3f.navy.mil/rimpac_2010.html).

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